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RETHINKING THE TWO FACES OF SVARĀJA : PRE-INDEPENDENCE AND POST-INDEPENDENCE

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1. Thinking and Re-thinking

We can think of anything whatsoever, with the only restriction that we cannot think of a thing the thought of which involves a contradiction. But we cannot rethink of every thing which is not self-contradictory because rethinking presupposes prior thinking. To rethink is to think again. We can rethink, or rethink of, a thing at any time only if we had thought, or thought of, it sometime earlier than t. When we think again of a thing, we normally think of it in a more careful, serious, or critical manner, and almost invariably in a revaluative manner. Speaking in a little more earthly manner, the rethinking of or about a phenomenon has the following structure: We first think of it as having such and such features, plan a scheme of actions in accordance with this thought, and bring the phenomenon into existence. But living with it for some time we find that it does not have all, or most, of the features which we had thought of it as having, or required of it to have; or, that some of the features it has are undesirable, or not very desirable, and some of those it does not have more desirable than some of those it has. We then naturally feel the need to rethink of it.

The seriousness or urgency of our rethinkinhg of a thing would be determined by a number of factors some of which are the followoing : Our valuing some of the features it is missing, our disvaluing some of the features it actually has acquired, our disposition or attitude to take seriously, or lethargically, what we consider desirable or undesirable, our intellectual maturity and ability to rightly distinguish between the desirable and the

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undesirable, our moral maturity to move us to take steps to make the phenomenon get rid of what we consider its undesirable features and acquire those which we consider desirable, our self-confidence, or lack of it, to produce the change or changes in the phenomenon we consider worth producing, etc., etc.

2. The Reason for Rethinking Svarāja

It is a historical truth that, before getting political independence, we had thought, or formed a picture, in our conception, or imagination, or the kind of thing or self-rule, or, *svarāja* would or should be. By *svarāja* then we did mean and even today mean political independence, self-rule, or self-government, i.e. emancipation of India from the foreign rule and putting it under the rule or governance of its own citizens. But we did not, and do not even today, mean by *svarāja* only this i.e. change of the ruler. We had also thought of its having a set of some other features in order to be the *svarāja* we were struggling to have. It can also be asserted as equally historically true that the *svarāja* we now have--and *we* have *svarāja* in the sense that our rulers are some of our own men and women, i.e. some Indians lack some of the features which we wanted it to have when we first thought of it and which we still very greatly value, and has come to acquire some other features which, as per its original conception, it was required *not* to have, i.e. to be free from. A large number of people, imbued with the original conception, still consider the latter undesirable. This is why we think it necessary to rethink of the *svarāja* we have. Therefore, the reason, for rethinking of *svarāja*, basically, is that the post-independence *svarāja* we are living, or living with, has become importantly different from what we had thought of it in our pre-independence conception of it.

On which lines the rethinking should be carried would depend on our reading of the lines on, or the aspects in which, the existing form of *svarāja* has faulted, or gone awry vis a vis the original, the pre-independence, conception. The reading of these lines, I admit, can be done in more than

one way. Someone may also not accept the original conception in toto and still think that the *svarāja* we have has gone awry. It is also possible that another person thinks in a way drastically different. For example, he may think that to be viable it should go still further on the lines, or at least on some of the lines, on which it has gone, or is going.

What I will do here is the following : I will first state the original conception of *svarāja* which would be a reconstructed, and not a reproduced, account out of some of the ideas of M.K. Gandhi about *svarāja* which he held while guiding the struggle for freedom or even after it. Then I will state, as per my perception, the ways in which the *svarāja* we have has gone astray, and finally suggest, in a revaluative manner, how to bring it back on the right rails. In the latter task the role which intellectuals can meaningfully play would also be touched upon. It will not be discussed in any great detail because it belongs, properly speaking, to another topic, namely, the social responsibilities of Indian intellectuals, and not so obviously to that of rethinking *svarāja.* But, all along, I will be presenting a substantive 'rethinking', and not just a formal, one. It would very likely be a personal one, but one with which. I hope, many would agree. There is nothing unfair in one's giving a personal rethinking if he admits, as I do, that there can also be some other, different, rethinkings of this matter. In reaching it I have tried to keep myself, as far as possible, behind the veil of ignorance, and therefore expect it to be the least idiosyncratic or biassed, if not completely unidiosyncratic or unbiased.

3. Pre-independence Conception of Svarāja ā la Gandhi

During the struggle for freedom Gandhi evolved a *comprehensive* concept of freedom or *svarāja* which did include freedom from foreign rule or domination as a basic component, but was not exhausted by it. It was a comprehensive concept of self-rule because it touched all the corners of an Indian's life and of the Indian society. In characterizing it he did use ideas obtained from his reflection on the nature of other societies and from his experinece while living in other societies, but he claims, as he puts it in a picturesque way, to have written it on 'the Indian state'.[1] By writing it on

the Indian state he means that he has drawn the picture of *svarāja* in the setting of the ethico-socio-cultural infrastructure of the Indian society as it has developed from the classical to the time he is passing through. In dilating, or building, on it I may not go completely on the lines he would have approved of. But I have no reason to think that he would have disapproved of it. In any case, the way I go gives a perspective to rethink of the *svarāja* we got, or have, in a manner very relevant to the prevailing social and societal situation, and this is a good justification for my going that way.

Gandhi says :

> Let there be no doubt about my conception of swaraj. It is complete independence of alien control and complete economic independence. So at one end we have political independence, at the other the economic. It has two other ends. One of them is moral and social, the corresponding end is Dharma, i.e., religion in the highest sense of the term. It includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., but is superior to them all. Let us call this square the square of Swarāj, which will be out of shape if any of its angles is untrue.[2]

At another place he asserts that "The essence of our civilization is that we give a paramount place to morality in all our affairs, public or private".[3] Since he describes what *svarāja* is on the Indian slate, it means that in India's *svarāja* morality has to occupy a paramount place. And, this *svarāja* would not be the *svarāja* of any particular class or group of people but that of each and every Indian. "Swaraj or a people means", he says, "the sum total of the swaraj (self-rule) of individuals"[4]. He is very emphatic about the dignity of the individual as, according to him, "Ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit",[5] whose *svarāja* is the basic brick of the *svarāja* of the people, or country, he belongs to.

4. Gandhi's Conception Elaborated and Reconstructed

When we organize the above ideas to get with them as its constituents a picture of *svarāja* on Gandhi's lines, it is obvious that a country, say

India, can be said to have *svarāja* in the true sense of the term if and only if it satisfies all of the following conditions :

(a) It is politically independent, i.e. not under the domination of any foreign, non-Indian, country, directly or indirectly. Since the *svarāja* of a country is the sum-total or aggregation of the *svarāja* of each and every citizen of it, it is also necessary that no citizen of it is under the domination of any foreign power. it may be said that when a country is free, every citizen of it is free. In a sense it is true, but only in a sense. A politically free citizen of a politically free country may be mentally servile to, or under the domination of, a foreign culture. To be truly free, he should be a free thinker, one with the ability to make his own decisions, and not chained, or sold, to an alien agency or culture. That is, he must have the rational maturity to make a proper decision, using his own mental resources, or have the potentiality to acquire such an ability. The duty of the state, in this regard, would be to provide to its citizens all the facilities, as far as possible, he needs in order to acquire this ability. One of the major, or the most important, factor in this connection would be the right sort of education which enables the educatee to develop his creative and critical potentialities.

An individual can be enslaved not only to a foreign culture, but also to some undesirable components of his own, and thereby cease to be free agent. For example, a Hindu may be so much glued to his institution of caste that he may find it abhoring for a member of one caste marrying a member of another caste, or think that caste differences are unbreakable because they have been created by god. Therefore, to be a free individual one has to have the ability to protect his individuality not only from being dominated by an alien culture, but also from being dominated by his own. This is necessary because every culture may have some components which have become dead wood, or which obstruct free thinking. It is more difficult to emancipate oneself from the domination of some undesirable components of one's indigenous culture than to emancipate from that of an alien culture. The grip of the former on his mind is much tighter than that of the latter. It is more difficult to be critical of one's own culture than to be of an alien

one, and it is particularly so if his culture is an old one. This is so because there is a strong feeling in the mind of many that the old is good simply because it is old. Age no doubt deserves respect, but not always. As Kālidāsa says in the very beginning of his *Mālavikāgnimitram*, the old is not good simply because it is old, nor the new bad simply because it is new; wise men consider anything good or bad only after properly assessing its worth, while dullards go by the judgement of others, or follow the traditional rating. Therefore to function as a free agent, to be a really free individual, one has to be not only critical of alien influences impinging on his style of life, but also of those which are rooted in his own culture. That is, he has to be self-critical. The ability to be self-critical, like the one to be self-respecting, is to be cultivated with circumspection because not only it is, like the latter, a difficult thing to do, but also because if overdone, it may make one a self-difident cynic, as the latter, if overdone, may make him a bloated egoist.

(b) A country is, as a country, economically independent if it does not need economic assistance from any alien agency (i) to sustain the welfare of its people and (ii) to provide every physically and mentally fit citizen of it, if he is willing to have, an occupation yielding him a wage sufficient to enable him to attain his well-being. (iii) In addition, for all those of its citizens, who are not physically or mentally fit to earn their living, it must have such economic arrangements which enable them to live a worth-while life. That is, in an economically independent country, it must be possible for every person, who is fit and willing to earn his living, to earn it in a manner compatible with self-respect and self-dignity. This is importnat because, in the Gandhian picture of the good life, an individual is the unit of his society, and a country's *svarāja* the aggregation of the *svarāja* of its citizens. If any citizen, fit and willing to earn his living, needs a dole from any agency, indigenous, or foreign, in order to survive, the country he belongs to is not really economically independent; or, if the country itself is economically independent, its political or economic arrangements are lop-sided on account of which an individual is to depend

on a dole for his survival. This would be true if the country is affluent but still has a citizen who is below the povertyline. But the country, or its political-economic arrangements, would be called faulty only if the latter is not himself totally responsible for his being below the poverty-line.

(c) The third component of *svarāja* is moral and social. Morality is a social phenomenon because to be moral is basically to have a concern for the welfare of the other. Therefore, a moral order would essentially contribute to social cohesion. In a pluralistic society social cohesion is extremely important, and the way to have it in a stable way is to give to morality a paramount place. Neither political, nor economic, independence of an individual can be maintained in a worth-while manner if morality is not honoured. Therefore, any commendable political, or, economic, system has to be based on morality. This means that the primacy of the moral has to be maintained in private and public arrangements. This means that when there is a conflict between a non-moral, for example a political, or economic, consideration and a moral consideration, the moral consideration has to be given the overriding position. It is legitimate for the moral to override the political, or the economic, but not for the latter to override the former. It may temporarily seem that it is more advantageous to adopt a politically, or economically, expedient policy or measure even if it is morally unjustified but in the long run such a step is bound to be injurious or self-defeating.

(d) The fourth component of *svarāja* is Dharma which is not religion in a particularist sense, in which it means Hinduism, Islam, etc., but in a more basic sense in which it is compatible with all particular religions. If we take Dharma in this sense, i.e. in the sense of something basic, or common, to all religions, again we find that it is nothing but the moral core of all religions. Only morality is inter-religious; in other respects, religions may differ among themselves. This means the primacy of the moral has to be accepted even in relation to the religion. That is, if a religious consideration conflicts with a moral consideration, then the moral is to be preferred, and not the religious. If a choice is to be made between constructing a place of worship to increase religiousity among the adherents

of a religion and constructing a hospital to provide health-care to the indigent, one who holds the primacy of the moral would say that there is a moral, and therefore a conclusive, overriding, reason for constructing the hospital, and for not constructing the place of worship.

All of (a), (b), (c) and (d) components are to hold good in a country in order that it may be credited with having *svarāja.* Even if the above is not a cent per cent correct characterization of the Gandhian notion of *svarāja* it is a fair enough characterization of the kind of *svarāja* Indians were, under Gandhi's leadership, aiming at in their struggle for freedom, or were hoping to have after emancipating the country from the British rule.

5. Rethinking svarāja : Revaluating the Received in the Light of the Conceived

It is some such thought of *svarāja* which at least the thinking type of Indians, unsold to a political party, still entertain. It is this thought which generates in them the need to rethink of the *svarāja* they have enjoyed, or suffered, for a little more than half a century. At the moment we have *svarāja* of some sort which does not seem to many of us the realization of the thought of *svarāja*, outlined above, which we originally had, or still have. Therefore, some rethinking is necessary. And, one who rethinks of it must not rethink of it in the light of the benefits India's *svarāja* has given to him, or of the deprivations it has inflicted on him. Let us, then, try to place ourselves imaginatively at an Archimedean point, i.e. occupy, as far as possible, a spot out side the social system to which we belong and which is living the existing *svarāja* In course of detecting or diagonising the latter's deviation from our earlier thought of *svarāja* we must also be ready to rethink even of the Gandhian model, if we find it necessary,

6. The Received svarāja Infringing the Two Principles of the Primacy of the Moral and of the Dignity of the Individual

For a non-political, or politically non-committal thinking, type of Indian, his actual experience of India's *svarāja* does not compare very favourably with the thought of *svarāja* outlined above, in some very

important respects. Two of them are the primacy of the moral and the dignity of the individual. *Svarāja* is a necessary institutional, or political, condition for leading a good life, for any citizen of any country. A good life may mean morally good life or a non-morally good life. The latter would mean a happy life led at any cost, even at the cost of some moral principles or values. Without defending it, since doing that would take me too far afield, I would simply assert that a morally good life is better than a non-morally good life howsoever happy the latter may be, and it is better simply because it is *morally* good. It is this truth which Hanumāna gives expression to when, seeing Rāvaṇa sleeping majestically on his golden bed in his golden palace, he exclaims that had morality been given its rightful place in Ravna's style of life, private and public, his kingdom would have shone with greater brilliance than that of Indra. When I say that *svarāja* self-rule, is an institutional condition for leading a good life, I mean a morally good life. A morally good life does not have to be a life made miserable by the ravages of poverty because poverty itself is a moral, and not just economic, evil. And, since equity is an important moral requirement, a morally good life has to be a life which ensures the well-being of all concerned, and enables each one to flourish as best as he can, or as his desert entitles him to.

In any democracy, power lies in the hands of elected representatives who generally belong, declaredly, or undeclaredly, to some political party or organization. Political power, in a democracy, is to be used to enable the people, who elect the ruling elite, to flourish in desirable, morally permissible, ways, keeping in view not only their flourishing but also equity and justice in the distribution of benefits and burdens. To fulfil these goals, the politician, the ruling elite, has to be fair to all concerned, and therefore he has to give primacy to moral considerations in whatever descision he takes, or whatever political, social, or economic, arrangements he plans to be, or gets, brought about. This means that he may have to initiate a measure which, though beneficial in the long run, or better than the other available alternative, is not so considered by his electrorate. This the ruling elite can do only if he adheres to the principle that a moral

consideration has the right to override any political consideration, for example, one which motivates him to do anything to please his electorate in order to be returned to power in the next election. In present-day political life, by and large, a political consideration overrules a moral one in the relation of the ruling elite to the ruled people, as well as in the relation exising among different political groups. Political practice primarily involves manipulative bargaining and adjustments and all sorts of compromises, including moral compromises.

It may be said that the principle of the primacy of the moral is a too purist, fanatiacal, principle, one which cannot always be adhered to in any political practice. Therefore, those, who believe in the theory of dirty hands, would say that political life is a life in which howsoever hard one may try to keep his hands clean, on some occasions he would have to dirty them. Perhaps this is true, and therefore the primacy of the moral has to be taken in a slightly liberal, or unrestrictive, way. Whenever the morally best is not obtainable, it may be urged, we have to be satisfied with what is morally good enough. Therefore, to the politician it can be said that some specks of dirt on his hands are condonable. But no one would condone if they are soiled more often than not. What has happened is that political practice has become permeated with a pervasive climate of moral relaxation, or, amorality. A general consensus seems ot have emerged among political parties that it is out of date, or too academic, to raise a moral issue in settling an intra-party or inter-party political dispute, or even in taking a political decision, or formulating a political policy. Some immorality in political affairs an otherwise healthy policy can digest, as some infected good healthy stomach can digest. But there is a limit to this kind of tolerance, and it seems the amorality, or neglect of morality, in Indian politics, has exceeded the limit of Indian polity's tolerance, or power of digestion. Since political power is at the top, the consensus about indifference to morality has percolated from top to bottam. It was to prevent this sort of percolation that Jai Prakash Narayan used to emphasize that it is most important to keep Gangotrī clean. It may be that the consensus about amorality, or neglect of morality, is the result of moral apathy travelling from the bottom to the top, but as per the

law of gravity it is more natural, and easier, for any thing to fall from the top to the bottom.

The people of a country can, in principle, vote out a political party if they find that, when in power, it has not served them well. But the ability to decide who is, and who is not, a good candidate, in an election, is not present in a large number of voters, nor do they have the ability to decide which political policy is going to serve them better in the long run. For example, the reservation policy is prone to develop in a beneficiary an attachment for his backwardness, since as long as he remains backward, he would be benefitting from the policy, no matter whether or not he improves his capabilitiees. If such a thing happens, he will not only lose his motivation to grow up, to improve, his capabilities. He would devlop a feeling of self-diffidence as he would have the nagging feeling that he has got what he has got not because of his desert, his abilities, but because of his caste, his backwardness. This awareness would make him fall in his own estimation, lose his self-respect, and the overall result would be the belittling of the dignity of the individual, the 'I', in him. Losing one's individuality, one's sense of agency, self-dignity, is a much greater loss than losing a property. If, on the other hand, he develops a feeling of pride because of having got something without having the required capability, it would be worse for the society because he would be spreading among his associates a similar feeling and a consequential diseregard for acquiring, or developing in oneself, the approapriate capability for getting, or retaining, a position. In both of the two possibilities, the individual loses his dignity and may think the politician to be his real benefactor, and therefore use his vote to keep the politician in power. Such a situation is very convenient for the politician becuase he finds it easier to get a legislation passed to provide jobs to some individuals than to provide them opportunities and facilities for developing or improving their capabilities. It is in the interest of the politician that people do not develop their capabilities because if they do, they would see through the game he is playing, and therefore may not help him to remain in power.

Even among intellectuals, generally, one does not get an honour or position unless he has some link, direct or indirect, with some centre of

political power. Therefore, intellectual flocking around such a centre, or shifting their political loyalty, often expressed in the garb of intellectual conviction, according to the political weather of the country, is a common sight to see.

For the commoner, too, the situation is not very different. Respect for a person as a person, respecting him because he is the person he is, and not because of his caste, position, power, or property, etc. is not a very common thing. That is why middlemanship has become a flourishing profession. The commoner, too, therefore, is prone to under-value his individuality or personhood. There is, thus, visible in almost every sphere a tendency to undervalue, or belittle, the dignity of the individual in one's own person, or in another's. To use the words of Wordsworth, it is saddening to see 'what man has made of man'.

The primacy of the moral and respect for the intrinsic dignity of the individual, the two basic components of our thought of *svarāja* are intimately related to each other because the dignity of the individual is in itself a moral value. Therefore, to infringe one is almost always to infringe the other. Both seem to have been very greatly infringed when we *rethink* of the Gandhian, our original, and still not extinct, conception of *svarāja,* putting it by the side of what we have actually made of the *svarāja* we gained after the transfer of power by the British rulers to Indian rulers.

It would be unfair to say that the Gandhian model is too utopean and therefore that those who are discontented with the *svarāja* we are living with are either obstinate utopeans or incurable cynics. The Gandhian model is not even too idealistic, what to speak of being too utopean. It is much humbler than the later model of a highly industrialised, internationally competetive India. In fact, even the later model cannot be realized in a manner felicific for at the least the majority of the Indian population by ignoring any of the four sides of the Gandhian square of *svarāja.*

Before concluding this essay I will say a few things more about the two components I have discussed above while discussing what intellectuals can do in the direction of getting them honoured more than they presently

are in political behaviour, or rather in the behaviour of the Indian people, and thereby in realizing the original thought of *svarāja.*

7. Role of Intellectuals

It may be said that to properly rehabilitate the primacy of the moral and dignity of the individual (and do a lot more), we need to change the prevailing pattern of political functioning in the country. It is something like this which, Gandhi felt, needed to be done immediately after gaining political independence. He seems to have had a foreboding that Indian politics would shape in the coming years the way it has actually shaped. His draft[6] of a new constitution for the Indian National Congress, which he made on January 29, 1948, just a day before his death, very clearly shows which way he wanted the politics of the country to go. But that draft has become only a document stored in the annals of Indian history. Jai Prakash Narayan tried to change Indian politics by leading a people's movement to get introduced the provision of giving to an electorate the right to de-elect an elected representive if found errant and to get political power replaced by people's power. The result of his struggle is well known to any student of modern Indian history. Therefore, 'change the politics' is easier said than done. But it is also true that politics of the country has to be changed.

An intellectual is not, or need not, rather better not, be a politician, or sold to a political ideology or party. In he is, then he cannot play the role which only an intellectual can, and therefore should, play in striking at the amorality, or, moral apathy, of the Indian politician. He can strike at it only by doing well what he, as an intellectual, can do, i.e. by doing well his own calling, by doing constructive, objective, criticism of political plans, projects, and policies, in brief, the functioning of the political parties which are, as well as of those which are not, in power. This is his limit, but not a frustrating limit. Assuming that education is in the hands of intellectuals, intellectuals can do a lot by helping an educatee develop a critical, assessive, bent of mind, a habit of mind which enables him to see things as they really are. Proper education is the most potent agent of making a people capable of making right decisions and choices.

But who is an intellectual? Any one, I would say, who can make a creative use of his intellect, his thinking ability. He does not have to be a professor. Only, he must not be a parrot, not even a parrot who has learnt to utter some Vedic mantras, and Mandana Mishra's parrot cannot be called a logician even though he had learnt to utter the question whether the validity of a piece of knowledge is intrinsic, or extrinsic, to it. Criticizing a national polity, or even an age-old cultural practice, is not to be impatriotic, as some people may think. Those who do they do that because they slur over the distinction betwen patriotism and nationalism. A patriot is he who examines a stand taken by his country, or a stand approved of by his culture, and accepts or rejects it on its merits, whereas a nationalist accepts whatever his country or culture approves of, or considers commendable, even if it is not defensible. Patriotism is, whereas nationalism is not, in tune with the intellectual temper. Therefore, in criticizing a policy, or plan, prepared by the ruling elite of his country, an intellectual would not become impatriotic. He would not even if he criticizes a tenet held to be sacrosanct in his classical culture. At the present moment many intellectuals have developed some sort of a political apathy which to me seems to be a symptom of pessimism or frustration. Their thinking seems to run as follows : Politics of the country has become incurable. The *svarāja* we had thought of and fought for, and the *svarāja* we are suffering from, are two kinds of animals. To replace the latter by the former is impossible. Therefore, better lock ourselves inside our laboratory or library and let the politicians play their game as they want to. The fatalists among them say : There would some day be a nemesis; after all, the depth of the pit is limited; some day it is bound to be full, and further falling down into it to stop. But being fatalists, even they too are politically apathetic. This apathy has first to be jolted, and then only intellectuals can play their role of the critic of social, including political, plans, policies, and practices, with care, caution and confidence, as a step in the direction of potentizing, what Jai Prakash Narayan called, people's power, which alone, in a democracy can replace an anaemic *svarāja* with a full-blooded one.

In saying all that I have said here--and admitting that the number of

sayable things left unsaid is much larger than the things said--I have all along been assuming that there are in the country some free-thinking, unsold, or uncommitted, creative, and fearless intellectuals, and some people, even in the arena of politics, who honour the primacy of the moral and the dignity of the individual. I hope it is not a totally unfounded assumption. Moreover, if we do not have it, we cannot even think of rethinking *svarāja*.

NOTES

A revised version of the keynote address, under the title on the Why and How of Rethinking *svarāja* ,' to the National Seminar on 'Rethinking *svarāja* delivered on January 24, 2000, at the Indian International Centre, New Delhi.

1. M.K. Gandhi, *India of My Dreams*, Compiled by R.K. Prabhu (Navajivan 1947), p. 8.
2. *Ibid,* p.10
3. *Ibid,* p.9
4. *Ibid,* p.11
5. *Ibid,* p.99
6. *Ibid,* pp. 290-93

KANT'S MORALITY AND WILLIAMS' ETHICS

PALLAVI VAID

'Morality' can be understood as a social construct, a system for regulating the relations between people. To some extent, it is a theoretical construct too, a product of the philosophical impulse to arrive at a determinate account of 'right' and 'wrong'. The morality system, as represented by Kant, is preoccupied with detachment and impartiality and, Bernard Williams thinks, we would be better off without it. He distinguishes between the terms 'moral' or 'morality' and the ethical. The former is mainly about social expectations, socially expected norms which direct us to act in a particular way. On the other hand, the term 'ethical' emphasizes individual character[1]. Williams does not define the notion of the ethical. Instead he tells us what goes into this notion. Used in a wide sense, the various considerations that provide content to the term 'ethical' are those of obligation, and the various virtues including the tendency towards the welfare of others. Unlike Kantian morality, the ethical does not see moral obligation as inescapable, rather it is rightly seen as one kind of consideration among others.

Kant thought that moral considerations should be given the highest deliberative priority and that only an obligation can beat another obligation. When Kant thinks that the demands of morality are unconditional and necessary, they are so in the sense that they are obligatory independently of the agent's desires and inclinations which may interfere with the performance of duty. For Kant, unconditional practical necessity is peculiar to morality; nothing else can be unconditionally necessary except the requirements of moral law. But for us there are kinds of importance, and practical necessity may be available to reasons for action which are not strictly ethical in nature. Morality expects the perspective of

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